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President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda item 26

Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States: report of the Secretary-General (A/49/419)

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/419)?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The first speaker is the Prime Minister of Latvia.

Mr. Maris Gailis, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon the Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia.

Mr. Gailis (Latvia): On behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia, I have the honour to address the United Nations General Assembly on the agenda item entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States".

Following the restoration of independence, a singular priority for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was the withdrawal of foreign military forces from their territories. Today, we pay tribute to the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as to the individual States that played a vital role in achieving this end.

In resolutions 47/21 and 48/18, the General Assembly called for the conclusion of bilateral agreements providing for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of Estonia and Latvia. The adoption of those resolutions raised, from the regional to the global level, the commitment reached by the participating States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in paragraph 15 of the 1992 Helsinki Document.

I have the pleasure to report on the implementation of resolutions 47/21 and 48/18, as well as of paragraph 15 of the CSCE Helsinki Document. In September 1992, the Defence Ministers of Lithuania and the Russian Federation signed agreements providing for the complete withdrawal of Russian military forces from Lithuania by 31 August 1993. It was nearly two years later when the President of Latvia and the President of Estonia, on 30 April 1994 and 26 July 1994, respectively, signed bilateral agreements with the President of the Russian Federation providing for the complete withdrawal of Russian military forces from Latvia and Estonia by 31 August 1994. On the whole, pursuant to the agreements signed among the parties, the Russian Federation military

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forces were withdrawn from Lithuania by 31 August 1993 and from Estonia and Latvia by 31 August 1994.

That withdrawal is an event of historic significance for the Baltic States, the Russian Federation and Europe. For Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, it brings to an end one of the consequences of the Second World War. For the Russian Federation, it is a milestone on the path towards democratization and a repudiation of an odious part of the Soviet Union's legacy. For Europe, it means increased security and new opportunities for cooperation and integration. For the international community as a whole, the withdrawal of Russian military forces from the Baltic States is a positive contribution to the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

The withdrawal represents a welcome reduction of military forces in the Baltic Sea region. A further reduction of military forces in the region is a desirable and achievable goal and would be conducive to the enhancement of stability and security in the entire Baltic Sea area.

The agreements reached among the parties, which were made possible by continued efforts and a readiness to compromise, contribute to the European Union's initiative for a pact on stability. The withdrawal affirms the supremacy of the rule of law, sovereign equality and the principle that military forces may not be stationed on the territory of another State without its consent. Moreover, the withdrawal takes an initial step towards remedying the consequences of a breach of international law, namely, the secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939, by which Europe was divided into spheres of influence.

The withdrawal is a significant step towards the establishment of good-neighbourly relations between the Baltic States and the Russian Federation. Normalization of relations will open the way to cooperation in many areas. Improved trade between the countries, particularly the elimination of discriminatory tariffs, is a logical next step towards normalization of relations and would be in conformity with the principle of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization.

Our bilateral negotiations were concluded successfully with the active involvement of the international community. The complementary roles of the United Nations and the CSCE, in particular, lent transparency to the negotiating process. The efforts of international organizations and of individual States in bringing about the resolution of this issue constitute a shining example of preventive diplomacy.

We express our gratitude to those States and organizations that have been able to provide political support and financial resources for the implementation of the agreements and for the multilateral efforts to help the Russian Federation build the needed housing for troops and their families returning from the Baltic States.

We thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his use of good offices in the past, including the work of his Special Envoy, and we welcome his readiness to provide good offices in the future to facilitate, if necessary, the full implementation of the agreements.

We consider the strict implementation of the agreements to be of paramount importance. Although the withdrawal of active military units has been implemented, there remain agreements that require monitoring and continued cooperation by all sides, as well as the involvement of the international community, until the conclusion of this century.

I refer, in particular, to the Latvian-Russian agreement providing for the temporary functioning of an anti-ballistic missile early-warning radar station in Skrunda, Latvia, until 31 August 1998 and its dismantlement no later than 29 February 2000. The Skrunda agreement is an inalienable part of the withdrawal agreement between Latvia and the Russian Federation. According to the agreement, the Skrunda radar station is a Russian military establishment under civilian control — nothing in the agreement shall be considered as giving the radar station the status of a military base.

Pursuant to article 18 of the Skrunda agreement, the Russian Federation has deposited a document with the United Nations Security Council which affirms the guarantees of the Russian Federation that the agreement will not be exploited for activities directed against the sovereignty and security interests of Latvia. The Skrunda agreement further provides that any attempt to settle disputes or differences of opinion connected with the agreement by means of military threats or by the use of armed force shall be considered a threat to international peace and security and, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations, shall be brought before the Security Council.

I have the honour to announce that the parliaments of Latvia and the Russian Federation have recently ratified the package of agreements concluded; these agreements will shortly be registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations. I also wish to thank those Governments which have made significant material contributions towards the implementation of the Skrunda agreement.

The Estonian-Russian agreement on the former Soviet naval base at Paldiski, Estonia, provides for the dismantlement of two nuclear reactors by the Russian Federation by 30 September 1995. From the progress reported to date, we are convinced that the Russian Federation will complete the task by the designated date. We are grateful for the international effort to mitigate some of the environmental effects associated with the Paldiski nuclear reactors.

Significant progress has been achieved with the signing of agreements between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Russian Federation respectively. Unfortunately, outstanding issues related to the former presence of foreign military forces remain to be resolved. We hope to continue building good cooperative relations with the Russian Federation and strive for the solution of these outstanding issues in a spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding.

A principal concern for Estonia and Latvia is that several thousand active-duty Russian Federation military personnel were demobilized or retired in the territories of Estonia and Latvia prior to 31 August 1994, in violation of the withdrawal agreements, and remain there today. These personnel, many of whom wish to return to the Russian Federation but have been abandoned by the Russian authorities, were, under the agreements, to have been withdrawn to the Russian Federation. The Russian authorities have stated that these former military personnel will be withdrawn from Latvia by the end of this year. It is our hope that this will in fact occur, and we reaffirm our readiness to cooperate on the resolution of this issue.

Greater cooperation is needed regarding the question of military transit through the territory of Lithuania. On 3 October 1994 the Government of Lithuania adopted national rules, to be applied universally and uniformly, to regulate the orderly and safe transport through Lithuanian territory of foreign military and hazardous materials. The Baltic States stress that military transit must be conducted in full compliance with existing national regulations and in accordance with international law. The Baltic States urge all States to respect and adhere to these requirements.

The Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are deeply concerned about the significant environmental damage in our countries, following more than 50 years of unchecked foreign military activity. Priority areas in need of remedial action are fuel-contaminated soil and groundwater, and chemical and radioactive waste sites. We encourage all concerned parties to assist the mitigation of the damage left behind by the foreign military forces.

We are optimistic that through international cooperation we shall achieve the implementation of all the agreements concluded between our countries and the Russian Federation and resolve the outstanding issues. At the same time, we emphasize that the development of the security situation in the Baltic region should continue to receive the attention of the international community.

Yesterday, at the conclusion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) summit in Budapest a declaration on Baltic issues was adopted and the 52 participating States of the CSCE have at the highest level confirmed again the readiness of the CSCE to participate in the monitoring of the implementation of the Latvian-Russian agreements. This ensures that in the near future the CSCE will complete the formulation of an effective inspection regime regarding the control of the operation of the Skrunda radar station.

The withdrawal of foreign military forces from our countries will enhance the consolidation of our restored democracies and accelerate the rebuilding of our economies. These in turn will enable us to increase participation in such multilateral cooperative efforts as social development, disarmament, democratic institution-building and environment. Most importantly, we believe that a new era of fruitful and constructive cooperation with all of our neighbours is now a reality for our countries.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I thank Mr. Maris Gailis, Prime Minister of Latvia, for his statement on behalf of the Baltic States.

Mr. Maris Gailis, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: By 31 August 1994, the Russian Federation had concluded its complete and orderly withdrawal of troops from the territories of the Baltic States. Thereby, it had scrupulously complied with

United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/18 and its international commitments and graphically demonstrated its commitment to the principles of equality, respect for sovereignty and independence in its relations with the new independent States

What is important is that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/18, after complex and protracted negotiations, agreement was reached on a package of agreements with Latvia and Estonia, regulating various aspects of the process of troop withdrawal and taking account of the interests of each of the parties. The Russian Federation views these documents as an important contribution to the consolidation of security and stability in the region and in Europe as a whole. These documents have demonstrated that Russia and its Baltic partners can find solutions to the most complex problems we inherited from the past, reach compromises and move closer together.

With the completion of the troop withdrawals, we have turned a new page in our relations with the Baltic States. That page of the past has been turned once and for all, which enables us to shift our focus to humanitarian, trade and economic issues. Hence, the question of Russian troops on the territory of the Baltic States has been completely exhausted, and we can take pleasure in removing this item from the agenda of the General Assembly.

As the Assembly knows, the Russian Federation, in a demonstration of good will and of its desire to comply with the wishes of the Baltic States, began to withdraw its troops from those countries virtually immediately upon its assumption of command over the units of the armed forces of the former USSR deployed on their territories, without waiting for the signing of the relevant agreements. The scope and size of this unprecedented operation are borne out by the following figures: between March 1992 and August 1994, more than 100,000 military personnel were redeployed from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Russia; some 30,000 families of military personnel, totalling approximately 105,000 individuals, also left; 41,500 pieces of equipment and some 700,000 tonnes of supplies were withdrawn; and 230 ships departed from Baltic ports. It is not hard to imagine the enormous cost and organizational effort that this required on the part of Russia. Moreover, we must build thousands of apartments in Russia for the families of military personnel withdrawn from the Baltic countries.

The achievement of agreements between Russia and the Baltic countries on a range of issues relating to the withdrawal of troops was greatly assisted by the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and other international organizations, to which we express our thanks. We also thank the States that have made and continue to make specific contributions towards integrating Russian military personnel transferred out of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Russia recently ratified a package of military agreements with Latvia, and we are engaged in the process of submitting similar agreements with Estonia to the State Duma for ratification. The Russian side continues conscientiously to implement all the obligations it has assumed. We are ready to consider problems through bilateral commissions as provided for in those agreements. Such bodies have already been established with Latvia.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to CSCE participation in the implementation of our agreements with Estonia and Latvia; this would guarantee full compliance by the parties with their obligations. We are ready to cooperate constructively with all parties concerned in formulating the appropriate mandates.

Russia is prepared to develop relations with the Baltic States in all areas, including those mentioned this morning by the Prime Minister of Latvia and those unrelated to the question of the withdrawal of troops.

We hope that the conclusion of the military aspect of our relations with the Baltic countries will make it possible to consider in greater depth another of the region's problems which is a matter of concern and which has been the focus of attention by the United Nations and other international organizations: the situation of human rights in the Baltic countries. We believe that genuine progress can be achieved in this area too. Here, the initiative lies primarily with the Baltic States and the international community. We are pleased that our Baltic neighbours have expressed a willingness to engage in bilateral dialogue with Russia to seek a speedy solution to these problems related to the future of individuals in the region.

Mr. Graf zu Rantzau (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and Austria.

In the work of the General Assembly, happy endings are rare occasions. The withdrawal on 31 August of this year of the last military units of the Russian Federation from Estonia and Latvia falls squarely into that category. It was an event of great significance for the countries involved as well as for the entire region and, as such, fully deserves this Assembly's attention. The European Union commends the positive attitude displayed by Estonia, Latvia and the Russian Federation, without which this outcome would not have been possible.

It is worth recalling that when the Assembly first dealt with this agenda item, two years ago, Russian military forces were still stationed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Their presence in those countries was a legacy of the former Soviet Union. While that presence was unacceptable for the Baltic countries, the withdrawal of the troops represented in many ways a difficult task for the Russian Federation.

Negotiations on withdrawal began early in 1992. At the Helsinki summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in July of that year, Heads of State and Government called on the States concerned to conclude, without delay, appropriate bilateral agreements, including timetables, for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories of the Baltic States.

The Helsinki Declaration, in turn, represented the point of reference for this Assembly when at its forty-seventh session, it first pronounced itself on the question of troop withdrawal from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In resolution 47/21, and subsequently in resolution 48/18, the General Assembly in effect restated the essence of the Helsinki Declaration on this point. The Assembly also urged the Secretary-General to use his good offices to facilitate the withdrawal process. In the event, the Secretary-General played an important role in achieving the completion of the withdrawal process. We salute the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ambassador Koh as well as those of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Goulding, described in the Secretary-General's most recent report, dated 22 September.

The European Union notes that agreements have also been signed regarding the radar station in Skrunda, Latvia, and the nuclear facilities in Paldiski, Estonia. Further agreements have been concluded on social guarantees for retired military personnel of the Russian Federation living in those two countries. The European Union proceeds from the assumption that these agreements will be fully implemented. It welcomes the assurances given by the Russian Federation with regard to Skrunda, and hopes that an appropriate monitoring regime will be agreed upon shortly.

The European Union believes that the withdrawal of Russian armed forces from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania opens the way for increased cooperation between the Baltic States and the Russian Federation. We consider this step as a vital contribution to security and stability in the Baltic region as well as in the whole of Europe.

The European Union hopes that all countries involved will build upon this achievement and strive for the solution of remaining issues in a spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding. In a situation in which the European Union is developing increasingly close ties with both the Baltic States and the Russian Federation, it has an important stake in the further improvement of Baltic-Russian relations.

Mr. Haakonsen (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

The completion of the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Baltic States on 31 August 1994 marks a significant step towards security and stability in the Baltic region as well as in the northern European region as a whole.

The Nordic countries are very pleased to join the Secretary-General in commending all the parties concerned for their success in resolving the problems related to the presence of foreign armed forces in the territory of the Baltic States.

The agreements on troop withdrawal provided for a longer period for the dismantling and decommissioning of the Skrunda Radar and the Paldiski facilities. The Nordic countries welcome these agreements, as well as the agreements on social guarantees for retired military personnel and members of their families in Latvia and Estonia. The Nordic countries feel confident that the parties will continue to address all issues of concern in a spirit of cooperation.

Today, the Baltic region has re-emerged as a region with its own interests and opportunities. Through centuries, the region was characterized by extensive

political, economic and cultural links. These links are being re-established and are developing with remarkable momentum.

To the Nordic countries, this development is of special significance. We have an obvious interest not only in all efforts aimed at enhancing security and stability but also in the promotion of economic and cultural links in the Baltic region.

The Nordic countries have taken an active role in the preparation of initiatives concerning the Baltic region and in numerous Baltic cooperation activities and will continue to do so. Our endeavours to promote stability and economic development in the Baltic region also involve the areas of the Russian Federation in this region.

Continued friendly and cooperative relations between Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Russian Federation are fundamentally important for the future stability of the Baltic region. The completion of the process of the withdrawal of foreign military units from the Baltic States is also a decisive contribution to the maintenance of security in the northern European region as a whole.

Permanent security will, however, best be achieved by increasing and deepening trade, economic, and cultural cooperation between the parties. The precondition for such cooperation between the Russian Federation and its Baltic neighbours have now greatly improved. We are confident that in this spirit the parties will build upon the results achieved.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): The United States may claim with justification to be the champion of the independence of the Baltic States. During decades when this goal seemed a will-o'-the-wisp to many, my Government maintained in the words and substance of our policy that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were, and should be, independent nation States, and we insisted on the fulfilment of that independence. Re-establishment of the freedom and independence of these countries in 1991 was greeted with enthusiasm and satisfaction in my country; perhaps nowhere else is there as much appreciation of the cost paid by the Baltic peoples in the long quest for their national self-realization.

Full national independence manifests itself in the sovereign control of a Government over its national territory. For this reason, the United States supported this agenda item at both the forty-seventh and forty-eighth sessions of the General Assembly and lent its support to the good offices of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Professor Tommy Koh, in facilitating agreements for the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the Baltic States. The United States also, in a very tangible and practical way, joined the multilateral effort to assist the Russian Federation in the construction of housing for military personnel returning from the Baltic States and for their families.

It is with deep gratification that my delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's report, in which he:

> "commends all the parties concerned for their success in resolving the problems related to the presence of foreign armed forces in the territory of the Baltic States". (*A/49/419, para. 12*)

In particular, the report documents the recent bilateral agreements on the withdrawal of Russian armed forces and on social guarantees for retired military personnel residing in Latvia and Estonia. The peaceful resolution of this issue will mark a new page in the history of the Baltic region and can be the basis for friendly relations in the future.

With independence the Baltic States assumed the obligations contained in various international and regional agreements on human and civil rights. The underlying spirit of these obligations is that people must look to the future and not to the past in their relations with other people. History has often been painful, and especially so for the Baltic nations. However, their future must not be imprisoned by the past. As other countries hold out their hands to the Baltic peoples, we ask them to build their futures on principles rather than on prejudice. We expect the Baltic nations will fulfil their destinies as free, independent and progressive States, and that their restored membership in the community of nations will be reflected in the relations among the communities which live in these countries as well as in relations with their independent and democratic neighbours.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): These days, when the United Nations is so frequently forced to focus on dismal, even catastrophic events, it is refreshing and stimulating to note that some developments turn out well. Agenda item 26 is an example. The complete withdrawal of Russian military forces, first from Lithuania and, a year later, from Estonia and Latvia, has been accomplished and we can thus scratch this item off our agenda.

The former Czechoslovakia was the first of the erstwhile Warsaw Pact countries to successfully negotiate the withdrawal of Soviet troops from its territory. We are consequently well aware of the intricacies connected with this exercise. In those heady days of 1990, only the greatest optimists, perhaps, only idealists, would have believed that within five years the Baltic countries would be independent, sovereign and free of foreign troops. We are happy that in its own way, the Czech Republic modestly contributed to the efforts that culminated in extraordinary success last August. Our involvement included not only our constant moral support to our Baltic friends but also, for example, our participation last year in Ambassador Tommy Koh's mission to the Baltics on behalf of the Secretary-General.

We note that certain questions remain unresolved. These concern, for example, retired or demobilized personnel of the Russian armed forces currently residing in Estonia and Latvia. We believe, however, that once a solution is reached to the big problems, small problems also will be resolved in due course. We are also aware of the environmental damage that the Russian forces left behind, if only because we encountered a similar situation after their departure from our own country. Cleaning it up will be a great challenge for the Baltic countries, both technically and financially, but it is an important condition for their healthy — in every sense of the word - economic progress.

My Government congratulates our Baltic friends on this occasion, even as, today, Presidents of all three countries are visiting Prague. We also congratulate the leadership of the Russian Federation on having demonstrated the necessary wisdom and resolve in completing a task which, on a personal level, for the soldiers involved, must have been exceedingly difficult. But, as a consequence, Europe's North and the Baltic Sea region have become safer places.

Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan): For the third consecutive year, the General Assembly is discussing the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States.

My delegation has taken a special interest in this item since it first appeared on the agenda of the General Assembly. As we have stated in the past, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, on the basis of the principles of its foreign policy, is, and will continue to be, against the presence of foreign military forces on any territory under any pretext that goes counter to the will and aspirations of a nation. Any such presence should be terminated immediately, totally and unconditionally.

The creation, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, of a positive political atmosphere conducive to the peaceful settlement of disputes, an atmosphere helped by the cooperative attitude shown by the countries concerned and commendable efforts of the United Nations, has been marked by remarkable progress towards the realization of the objective for which the item was inscribed on the agenda in 1992.

Last year, after some positive developments had been observed, the Secretary-General was requested by the General Assembly to use his good offices to facilitate the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of Estonia and Latvia.

The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 48/18 indicates positive developments with regard to the situation in Lithuania. We hope that the remaining issues will be resolved more quickly through bilateral channels.

With regard to Latvia, the signing of a number of agreements on practical issues between the Russian Federation and Latvia, which resulted in the withdrawal of Russian forces from Latvia before 31 August 1994, represented progress towards the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

As for Estonia, it is a matter for satisfaction that the withdrawal of the remaining Russian troops was completed according to schedule, namely, before 31 August 1994.

Afghanistan commends the cooperative attitude, farsightedness and political wisdom with which the Russian Federation and the Baltic States were able to resolve this issue. With respect to this achievement, the multilateral efforts that facilitated the success of the process should also be commended.

In spite of these achievements, Estonia and Latvia seem to feel some concern that there has not been full implementation of the agreements. However, the positive and cooperative atmosphere and the sense of trust created between the countries concerned as a result of the withdrawals provides assurances that the bilateral channel will be helpful in the resolution of any remaining side issues. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe can play a positive role to this end.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as sovereign Member States of the Baltic region, expect every neighbouring State to respect their national laws and regulations and to observe the principles of international law in their mutual relations.

The resolution of the Baltic issue was one of the best examples of the effectiveness of preventive diplomacy, cooperation, understanding and political will, and it certainly enhanced the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

The long-suffering Baltic nations deserve a chance to make their full contribution and use their potential, for full integration into the economic, political and security structures of Europe.

The people and the Government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan hope that the people of the Baltic States, who have endured decades of pain and suffering, will cherish the values of peace, complete independence and democracy and enjoy further prosperity and progress.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 26?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 156

Building a peaceful and better world through sport: draft resolution A/49/L.46.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call first on the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.46.

Mr. Young (United States of America): On behalf of the Government of the United States of America and as a representative of that Government, but also as Co-Chairman of the Atlanta Committee to organize the Centennial Olympic Games in 1996, I am very pleased to return to this Hall to share with the Assembly this draft resolution on the building of peace through sport.

I should like to read out the additional sponsors to this draft resolution that were not listed in the printing. It is probably the longest and most distinguished list of nations on any draft resolution sponsored by the United States in a long, long time.

It expresses the unanimity of the family of peoples on this Earth in the belief that it is possible for us to build peace through sport. I should like to add the following countries to the list of sponsors: Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belize, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Iran, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Solomon Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Viet Nam. That makes a total of 134 sponsors of this draft resolution.

It has been the experience of this Assembly and of the family of nations that when we have been able to agree on nothing else we have been able to agree to come together in peaceful competition. Indeed, much of the success of this body has centred around friendships and fellowships that have developed through sport. My own experience here as the United States Ambassador some 15 years ago was that, as a result of my own tennis partnership with the Ambassador of the Soviet Union — we played tennis regularly almost every month and always split sets, as good diplomats should — we maintained the kind of friendship in which, during one three-year period, there was never a United States veto of a Russian item and never a Russian veto of a United States item.

I would also suggest that, as a result of the kind of sports competition that we have seen — the table-tennis friendship with the People's Republic of China, which opened our conversations with that great nation; the Olympic Games in which the United States was first defeated by the Soviet Union in basketball, our game, and then, at a later time, the United States team won in hockey, a winter sport and more of a Russian game — we have developed relationships that have enhanced the work of this body. We in the United States Government and in the Olympic family insist that it is possible to continue to build world peace through sport.

In July 1996, we will celebrate the centennial Olympic Games in the city of Atlanta. We expect more than 200 nations of the world to field athletic squads. In keeping with Olympic tradition and as a result of the suggestion of this Assembly, we will be making great efforts to observe during that period an Olympic Truce. It is our fervent hope and prayer that for 16 days there will be a cessation of all hostilities and that the world may engage in pursuits that strengthen families and the lives of our children. We will be working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in this direction and attempting to build bridges of hope and understanding. Since 80 per cent of the world's population will view the Olympic activities on television, we have an opportunity through global communications to involve people all over the world in the events of the Olympic centennial in Atlanta in July 1996.

We have seen that, in spite of the difficulties that might have existed in Nigeria, when its football team was doing well in the World Cup Nigeria seemed to move together a little better. We have seen time and time again nations restoring their own sense of dignity and national honour as their athletes have competed with the athletes of the world and demonstrated the kind of pride and accomplishment that lets us know that the blessings that are upon the children of this planet extend to all races, nations and creeds and that, together, it is possible for us to build a peaceful planet.

It is in this context that our delegation has been pleased to learn that this draft resolution is being sponsored by so many nations. It is my hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution and that we may begin to celebrate all over the world the fact that for just 16 days there can be a window of opportunity, not for negotiations but simply for peace, and that as a result of that peace the children of the world may find their lives improved and the youth of the world may understand that there is another way for us to live together on this planet.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly is today paying tribute to the Olympic Ideal as a force for international understanding among the youth of the world through sports and culture, with the aim of promoting the harmonious development of mankind. It is a fortunate coincidence that this debate is taking place in 1994, declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, in commemoration of the centenary of the founding of the International Olympic Committee.

In his message to Mr. Amara Essy, the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee, affirms that:

> "Olympism will continue to use its conciliatory influence and humanism to foster peace and international understanding".

He adds the striking point that:

> "Sport for all, health for all, teaching the Olympic Ideal, fair play and sports ethics, the protection and preservation of the environment, campaigns against doping, drugs and violence in sports, and preventative education against scourges such as AIDS are all activities that are part of our moral obligation to the international community." (*A/49/720, p. 4*)

We have just heard a statement in harmony with the Olympic Ideal by Ambassador Andrew Young, co-Chairman of the Atlanta Committee to Organize the Centennial Olympic Games. He introduced draft resolution A/49/L.46 and eloquently advocated respect for the Olympic Truce, which it is hoped will be observed during the Centennial Olympic summer Games to be held in Atlanta in 1996. Those who had the privilege of being Ambassador Young's colleagues in the General Assembly, the Security Council and other bodies of the United Nations system are particularly happy to tell him that the United States has never had a good-will Ambassador of higher calibre or as capable of reconciling political realities with the aspirations to freedom, dignity and justice held by so many peoples of different cultural backgrounds and homelands. Ambassador Young's presence here today lends prestige to this world Organization. His moral stature has left indelible imprints of respect and admiration on many international forums. The world and those who espouse human rights see in him the greatest champion in theory and in practice of the course set by Martin Luther King.

Allow me to offer a number of points that we consider to be pertinent.

Panama is taking part in the work of this session of the General Assembly with feelings divided between enthusiasm over the achievements of dialogue and international cooperation and perplexity in the face of the scale of the tasks that still need to be accomplished if we are to realize the dreams of freedom, solidarity,

happiness and peace. The inclusion in the agenda of the item now before us, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport", seems to us to be a very wise move.

My delegation sincerely congratulates those who conceived the inclusion of this item. It conveys a fresh and creative idea, which gives food for thought and should stimulate an extremely important dialogue. It is especially manifest in the context of this session of the General Assembly that many political and economic problems are at bottom problems of education and of culture. They are problems associated with the way in which we deal with our own humanity.

Through its Charter, the United Nations established its purposes and conceived an almost miraculous design in order to achieve them. We must acknowledge that it has not achieved those purposes, because mankind is still beset by atrocious injustices in all aspects: biological, moral, political and economic. We believe that it is these injustices that dictate that mankind's great gift for creativity should be offset by an equally strong capacity for destruction. Sometimes we are enthusiastic, because it seems to us that mankind is on the threshold of a rebirth, while at other times we feel disheartened because we feel it is on the brink of the abyss.

When we place all these thoughts and feelings in the context of the history and the present realities of the United Nations, we feel that those of us who are here today should be, in addition to being representatives of Governments or authorized observers, also witnesses to the fact that our feelings are not apocalyptic in nature and that our vision is not one of desperation.

The delegation of Panama, through its statements in the General Assembly, has placed on record its constant concern that the people of Panama, like the people of Latin America, should not live on the sidelines of history. Since the beginning of our national status, we have tended voluntarily or involuntarily to circulate through the arteries of various cultures and to experience the adventure of a kind of universalism capable of unifying the fragments of the world, just as the Panama Canal joins two of the planet's great bodies of water.

In the United Nations we need to be increasingly mindful of the fact that the price of any advance towards the future is borne not by an individual, not by a group, not by a nation, but by the human race. The fact of the contemporary world is that young people who do not seek refuge in drugs, or strong emotions, or violence, or pure consumerism are today asking themselves what they should do in order to avoid a bleaker future. I should add that I say this with great solemnity — a solemnity that is felt by someone who belongs to a generation that, paradoxically, had the good fortune to ask itself during its youth what to do in order to ensure that the future should be better.

For many years now, the United Nations system has set itself ambitious goals, including those that call for education for all, health for all, housing for all. The promotion and the development of physical education and sport for all — children, young people, the elderly — is a vital ingredient in some of these goals. For that reason, it is particularly important that the United Nations should promote cooperation in sport and in physical education at all possible levels: intergovernmental, non-governmental, through the Olympic Movement and through private sponsors. We wish to point out that, in our opinion, the United Nations should give pride of place to promoting the ethical values of sport and physical education, meaning that it should participate in and cooperate with any action aimed at combating anti-sport activities.

Lastly, my delegation, would like to stress certain ideas. The development of sport, as was already stated so eloquently here by Ambassador Young, means a genuine preparation for dialogue among human beings. Sport is the proper arena for the exercise of an active universalism. Sport is a valuable cultural product which, if it is promoted and developed, deepens understanding among people. Sport is a factor in limiting excessive behaviour, in that it strengthens the awareness of human limitations. Sport enables people to build, and people who build are capable of creating a better world in which peace reigns.

The delegation of Panama wishes to pay tribute to the Olympic Movement which, since its origins in Greece, when physical exploits were celebrated alongside music and poetry, has conveyed a single message: that men and women are obliged to cultivate the virtues they possess. Sport is the greatest antidote to the poisons which may lurk in words and in things.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the Olympic Ideal, as Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said, "is a hymn to tolerance and understanding among human beings and cultures". We concur with the Secretary-General that "the Olympic Ideal is a school of democracy" and that "this means that there is a natural link between the ethics

of the Olympic Games and the fundamental principles of the United Nations."

In conclusion, I should like to request that the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.46 be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Pierre (Guyana): On 25 October last year, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions of special significance. I refer to the resolution on the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal and the resolution on the observance of the Olympic Truce. The one served to mark the centenary of the International Olympic Committee, while the other called for the cessation of hostilities during the Olympic Games. Together, they were intended to promote international understanding through the medium of sport.

As we in the General Assembly are only too well aware, global peace and security continue to elude our grasp. We are thankful that the period of intense super-Power rivalry is now behind us. The world has retreated from the threat of nuclear annihilation. We are now confronted, however, by numerous localized wars that resist all attempts at resolution — witness the many factional conflicts that are currently in progress in Europe, Africa and other areas of the world.

Commendably, the United Nations — particularly the Security Council — is striving to bring peace and stability to these troubled places. However, we are forced to recognize that, to date, the Organization's success has been severely circumscribed. While we hope for new breakthroughs in the various diplomatic and negotiating processes, we cannot escape the conclusion that new concepts and fresh approaches are needed to deal with the persistence and proliferation of conflict.

The initiatives that have come out of the International Olympic Committee represent a bold and imaginative step forward towards securing durable peace. It is a telling fact that a total of 134 Member States appended their names as sponsors of the draft resolution on observance of the Olympic Truce. The international community obviously hoped that it could in this way revive the practice of the old Olympic Games whereby all aggression was suspended for their duration.

By extending the principle of *ekecheria*, or Olympic Truce, we can at least pray for some respite, however temporary, from the killings and destruction that accompany conflict. The truce, as we know it, normally lasted for the period of the sporting event. During that time national rivalries, jealousies and considerations of politics, race, religion, wealth and social status were cast aside. Kings competed with commoners for the honour of winning the simple branch of wild olive which was given to each victor and which, over the years, has come to symbolize peace.

With political commitment, however, the Olympic Truce, which was considered sacred by all participants, could be prolonged indefinitely. We therefore call upon people of goodwill everywhere to place at the forefront of their thoughts and action the principles and ideals that *ekecheria* and Olympism seek to propagate. To those currently engaged in conflict we issue the appeal that, despite the urgency and validity of the causes for which they struggle, they show some regard for these higher principles that have been endorsed by the United Nations.

The fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement embrace the values and ideals of this Organization. It is therefore possible for the Movement to collaborate with us in the campaign to achieve world peace. It has made a valuable contribution towards the building of a better world through sport. The United Nations, for its part, has taken a major step in furthering its own efforts to foster peace and development by its full acceptance and endorsement of the concept of the Olympic Truce.

We are pleased to note the appreciable effort that the International Olympic Committee is making to provide humanitarian assistance to several war-torn areas. Such assistance enables the international community to make the best possible response to the growing number of situations that require its intervention. We wish to commend the Committee for its positive contribution and to invite its continued involvement in the work of our Organization. Accordingly, we are among the sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.46, which seeks to bring the International Olympic Committee into a closer relationship with the United Nations system.

The occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which we shall be celebrating next year, should see a concerted international effort to fulfil the principal aim of the Organization's Charter — namely, to rid this and succeeding generations of the scourge of war. Our peoples — particularly our youth — need to be educated in the virtues of peace. In this context, we welcome and endorse the proposal to hold a meeting of Ministers for youth and sport to consider the item

"Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic Ideal". Out of this forum should emerge a plan of cooperation to forge stronger links in sport between Member States — links that would bring them together in healthy competition instead of hostile confrontation.

As the Olympic torch moves from Barcelona to Atlanta, we must work to ensure that by the summer of 1996, when the International Olympic Committee will observe its centennial, a permanent truce will have been called in conflicts between and within nations. It will certainly be a worthy achievement if, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, mankind can enter a new age of universal peace and harmony.

Mr. Ibrahim Diallo (Guinea) *(interpretation from French):* Although the delegation of Guinea has already congratulated you, Mr. President, and expressed its pride at seeing you conducting the work of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, I hope that you will allow me, as a friend and brother, to carry out the sacred duty of expressing to the prominent representatives of nations gathered in this Assembly my sincere and deep gratitude for honouring with their confidence such a distinguished and eminent diplomat as our President Mr. Essy Amara.

We have before us a draft resolution relating to the Olympic Ideal, one of whose principles is to place sports at the service of the harmonious development of mankind with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society that desires the preservation of human dignity. With its symbol of five rings, representing the union of five continents and the meeting of athletes of the entire world in the Olympic Games, and with its famous slogan, "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*", the International Olympic Committee, of which I have the honour to be a member, has devoted itself for an entire century to the promotion of physical and sporting education.

The report of the President of the International Olympic Committee and the Coordinator of the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, the documents on the Olympic Truce that have been distributed to representatives' Missions and the summary that has been distributed by the Secretariat clearly demonstrate the efforts that are being made by Governments and by national Olympic Committees.

Equally, the overwhelming support of 134 countries for the draft resolution that is before the Assembly — a record, as has been pointed out by Ambassador Andrew Young — demonstrates the Assembly's interest in everything connected with youth, education, peace and international understanding based on friendship and solidarity.

The International Olympic Committee, through one of its specialized agencies — Olympic Solidarity — carries out at least three projects a year in every country of the world. The Committee provides scholarships for athletes, the most famous of whom is our Mozambican sister, Maria Lurdes Mutola, the world champion in the women's 800 metres event. Furthermore, it guarantees to preserve the universality of the Games and ensures the participation in them of athletes throughout the world by taking responsibility for the preparation of six athletes and two leaders per country.

The International Olympic Committee is the only non-governmental organization in which each national Olympic Committee member pays no dues; on the contrary, members receive an annual budget for their administration and the financing of their development projects.

One can never say enough about the important contribution which sports and culture offer to the world through events such as the World Cup, other world championships and the Olympic Games, all serving as examples to be followed. Today more than ever, the international community must understand that armed conflicts, racial and religious hatred and discrimination, intolerance and narrow-mindedness must henceforth give way to the healthy competition of body and mind, as taught and practised through sport and culture.

For this reason I should like to offer two instructive examples of communion in sport. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, victim of a war we all deplore, the Bosnian Olympic Committee recently organized sports events in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica. In Zenica there was a rugby match in which the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) participated. During the Olympic Games in Barcelona, in July 1992, in the famous 10,000-metre women's finals, the whole world witnessed an extraordinary gesture. Throughout the race two young women were engaged in a hard-fought struggle for the gold medal. When they crossed the finish line, the winner, the young Ethiopian, Derra Tutula, and her then rival on the track, Elena Mayer, a South African, threw their arms around each other. Forgetting everything that had divided and separated them since long before birth, the young African woman and the young white South African woman wrapped themselves in their respective

national flags and, hand in hand, took a victory lap before the delirious spectators in the stadium and millions of television viewers. Through this marvelous, spontaneous gesture by two athletes who were not even 20 years old, sport buried apartheid for ever.

We therefore fully agree with the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, when he says,

> "The Olympic Ideal inspires tolerance, understanding between States, human beings and cultures. It encourages competition, but competition with respect for others. In their own way the Olympic Games are a school of democracy. There is a natural link between the ethics of the Olympic Games and the fundamental principles of the United Nations."

Because of this truth, the delegation of the Republic of Guinea and the 132 other sponsors of the draft resolution before the Assembly ask that it be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At the last session of the General Assembly, thanks to the initiative taken by the Organization of African Unity, we had the opportunity to consider the question of building a peaceful and better world through sport. As a result of that debate, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/10, which declared 1994 International Year of Sport, and resolution 48/11, on the observance of the "Olympia Truce". Spain was one of the sponsors of those resolutions.

Once again I have the honour of addressing the Assembly on the question of the Olympic Ideal. Spain's association with the Olympic Movement in the modern era dates back to the advent of the modern Olympic Movement. Three Spaniards — Aniceto Sela, Adolfo Posada and Adolfo Buylla, all illustrious professors at the University of Oviedo — were present at the formation of the International Olympic Committee, which took place at the University of the Sorbonne in Paris exactly 100 years ago. For this reason we are particularly pleased that in this International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal it is also a Spaniard, Juan Antonio Samaranch, who is presiding over the destiny of the Olympic Movement.

In 1994 Spain has spared no effort to commemorate the centenary of the International Olympic Committee as it deserves to be commemorated: by supporting observance of the "Olympia Truce" in zones of armed conflict and contributing through a variety of activities to the attainment of the objectives of the International Olympic Year. For example, in 1994 Spain has hosted the fourth congress of the Ibero-American Association of Olympic Academies and organized the first iconographic exhibit on the life of the founder of the modern Olympic Movement, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

I should also like to recall that in 1992 my country organized the XXV Olympiad of the modern era in Barcelona, which was attended by all 169 countries members of the Olympic Movement after a number of Olympic Games that, because of various types of problems, had not enjoyed the participation of all members. The opening ceremony was attended by the King and Queen of Spain and 36 Heads of State and Government. I wish to underscore the presence there of another, particularly important guest: Mr. Nelson Mandela, later to be elected President of the Republic of South Africa. That occasion gave eloquent proof of Spain's faithfulness to the Olympic Ideal since the launching of the modern Olympic Movement in 1894. I should like to express the hope that the next Games, which will be held in 1996 in Atlanta and will mark the centenary of the Games of the modern era, will be another advance in the universalization of the Olympic Movement and in its contribution to peace and understanding between individuals and between peoples.

The International Olympic Committee is becoming more and more involved in humanitarian activities in various parts of the world. It also provides technical and financial assistance to developing countries through the executive agency of the Olympic Committee, which is known as Olympic Solidarity. Furthermore, the International Olympic Committee, in cooperation with various agencies of the United Nations system, is carrying out a world-wide campaign of preventive education aimed at young people and addressing grave problems in our societies, such as drugs and AIDS. It is also engaged in activities in the area of protection and preservation of the environment. In the last analysis, all these activities contribute to the building of a better world, in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

In this context, and in support of the efforts of the Olympic Movement to realize the objectives we all share, the Spanish delegation has joined the other sponsors of the draft resolution introduced today, and we are confident that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the current President of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

At its forty-eighth session the General Assembly proclaimed 1994 the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, thereby emphasizing its commitment to the principles and objectives the Olympic Movement has constantly upheld and disseminated — that is, the building of a peaceful and better world by educating the youth of the world through sport allied to culture.

For their part, the African Heads of State and Government, meeting at Tunis in June 1994 and inspired by that same ideal, reaffirmed their support for the proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal in order to mobilize the youth of the whole world in the cause of peace.

The African Heads of State also stressed the importance of the initiative taken by the International Olympic Committee to declare an Olympic Truce in the cause of peace. That initiative, which revives an ancient Greek tradition, is all the more valuable because it is completely in keeping with the principles of the United Nations Charter and promotes a spirit of fraternity and understanding between peoples.

In addition, the role played by the International Olympic Committee in the humanitarian sphere and in the sphere of its cooperation with various specialized agencies and national and regional Olympic organizations should be encouraged and strengthened because their input is of such great importance in promoting efforts to achieve better living conditions for human beings, which in turn helps to preserve international peace and security, given their obvious link to development.

In that spirit, my delegation supports the request contained in the draft resolution before us, under which the International Olympic Committee will be invited to attend various international conferences, including the Copenhagen social summit, the Peking Conference on women and the Nairobi Conference on human settlements, and thereby provide the International Olympic Committee with an opportunity to expand its field of interests and enhance its contribution to international cooperation.

In conclusion, we congratulate the International Olympic Committee on the commemoration of its centenary this year and express the Tunisian Government's keen interest in Olympic activities, which it has always supported and encouraged. The draft resolution before us is a text that deserves everyone's support with a view to promoting Olympic activities in behalf of peace and understanding between peoples.

Mr. Gervais (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): The International Olympic Committee is this year celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its founding at Paris in 1894, on the initiative of the French educator Baron Pierre de Coubertin. To pay tribute to that organization, which is led and supported on a volunteer basis, the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, in its resolution 48/10, proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal.

As the Assembly knows, the Olympic Movement is devoted to helping build a better and more peaceful world by educating youth through sport practised free from any form of discrimination and in the Olympic spirit, which stands for mutual understanding, friendship, solidarity and fair play.

In associating sport with culture and education, the Olympic Movement has set out to foster a life style based on joy through effort, on the value of education and respect for fundamental and universal principles. It was because of our belief in the Olympic Ideal that Côte d'Ivoire, a land of encounter, dialogue and fraternity, acted as host in 1977, at Abidjan, to the General Assembly of the world's Olympic National Committees, which thus met for the first time on African soil.

It need hardly be noted that it was because of the Olympic Ideal that the Olympic Movement in the 1960s joined in the struggle against apartheid in sport, then rife in South Africa. Nor need we dwell on the fact that the Olympic Committee is involved in humanitarian activities in countries engaged in armed conflict and that it is cooperating with the United Nations system in the areas of education, health and the environment.

As we are all aware, at its forty-eighth session the General Assembly adopted a resolution advocating an Olympic Truce, inspired by the ancient Greek tradition of *ekecheria*. In that resolution, of which my country was a sponsor, the Assembly urges respect for an ancient custom in our quest for universal peace and the protection of human rights. Through that praiseworthy initiative, I am happy to affirm that my country, Côte d'Ivoire, will continue to support and encourage the Olympic Movement.

As we have all been gratified to note from the document entitled "Olympic Truce" and in the final report on the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, the political and sports authorities of our various countries have been mobilized pursuant to resolutions 48/10 and 48/11. That mobilization attests to our countries' widespread interest in activities inspired by the Olympic spirit. I welcome the excellent results that have been obtained and pay tribute to the Olympic Movement for what it has done to promote the peace and the well-being of mankind.

The Olympic Ideal, which was the inspiration for the fundamental principles of our Organization, is thus in close harmony with the ideals of the United Nations Charter; hence the Assembly's interest in and expectations for the preparations for the next Games now under way in Atlanta, Georgia — and here we salute the remarkable energy and unique dedication Mr. Andrew Young and his team are bringing to that effort.

The Olympic Ideal must be constantly renewed if its flame is not to go out. Thus, the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, could not better express its support and encouragement to all who are striving to promote that ideal — like Mr. Andrew Young and the city of Atlanta — than by adopting the draft resolution now before us.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item, which has enabled us to welcome here Ambassador Andrew Young, the former Permanent Representative of the United States of America, and Ambassador Ibrahim Diallo, the former Permanent Representative of Guinea.

The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.46.

The following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Brazil, Nicaragua, Oman and Tajikistan. The number of sponsors of the draft resolution now totals 138.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.46?

Draft resolution A/49/L.46 was adopted (resolution 49/29).

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 156?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 159

Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies: draft resolution (A/49/L.49)

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Nicaragua to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.49.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The international political scene has undergone momentous changes in recent years. The world landscape until recently was very gloomy, because of the cold war, where effects made it impossible to imagine the scope of the changes that would occur later as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The fall of the Berlin wall and the ensuing political changes galvanized the democratization process in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, in Asia and in Europe. It also promoted the strengthening of the United Nations and the resolution of grave conflicts which had threatened international peace and security for many years.

On the new world scene, country after country has recognized democracy as the best system of government. Many electoral processes have taken place and political parties have formed in order to participate in democratic life have proliferated. Governments are now more tolerant, and more than ever before show respect for, and seek reconciliation with, their political opponents. Dictatorial presidents of the past are disappearing, just as totalitarian systems, apartheid and slavery have disappeared.

Since the Second World War, mankind has experienced nothing as dramatic as it has in this decade, with the collapse of totalitarianism. As a result of this process, millions of human beings have regained their freedom, and the consolidation of democracy has begun; democracy is now becoming universal, if not absolute, in the world.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This new trend and heartening progress on the world political scene offers an unprecedented opportunity to improve international cooperation for peace, development and democracy-building. But we must also recognize that these opportunities are fragile and likely to be short-lived, and if due advantage is not taken of them they will be swept away by negative trends which are appearing at the same time.

Conflicts and violence still persist in the world, both between States and within them. The savage resurgence of ethnic struggles, both of long standing and of recent origin; the threat of religious intolerance; new forms of racism and nationalism; recourse to terrorism; and flagrant aggression: all these seem to conspire to hinder the building of a more peaceful, safe, fair and tolerant world.

These same factors have also caused the disintegration of States and societies. This seems inconsistent with the tendency towards integration and greater interdependence of States, which would yield major economic and political benefits. Furthermore, international peace and security cannot be maintained in the new circumstances if the traditional concept of security is not broadened to include non-military aspects, such as structural underdevelopment and mass poverty, an acute scarcity of resources and the constant degradation of the environment.

However, the international community acknowledges today that the basis for solving many of the problems I have mentioned is the democratic system. Nevertheless, the future of democracy is still in jeopardy. Democracy is neither clear cut nor uniform, and in most cases is still based on flimsy political, economic and social structures. What is worse, many of our countries are plagued by hunger, poverty and despair, which may cancel out the accomplishments of the new and restored democracies and once again raise the spectre of war.

The fruits of the new international society, democratic and free, to which we all aspire will to a large extent depend on whether the process of transition is wholeheartedly supported. In the context of building a new international order, the United Nations has a historic responsibility under its Charter towards the future of the processes of democratization in the countries to which I have referred, in view of their vulnerability.

The United Nations should make it a priority to support the struggle being waged by many of the new or restored democracies to survive and to consolidate the processes under way, for that task accords with the purposes and principles of our Organization. Should these efforts come to nothing, and should faith in democracy be lost, the world might see a return to the old systems of domination and oppression.

The international community would be mistaken if it thought that in these nascent processes democracy can flourish on its own, and that simply enacting laws to abolish theories that condemn millions of human beings to a life of humiliation, a life under oppression, is enough to ensure that these new democratic processes can take hold spontaneously.

The international community has been slow to accept, and even slower to understand, the complexities and the scope of the emerging new democracies and the emancipation of old and new nations. These realities have been recognized only with difficulty. It is obvious that the world was not ready to tackle the obstacles and consequences, temporarily destabilizing, of processes which would ultimately lead to the full democratization of international relations.

For these reasons, the consolidation of a new, stable and secure international order, free from the dramatic inconsistencies of the past, calls for a renewed world-wide commitment through an international covenant on peace and democracy, under which the United Nations system will be called upon to play a particularly significant role.

We hail the wisdom of the Secretary-General, who included democracy among the five dimensions of development, and described it as the major task facing the international community and the greatest challenge facing our Organization.

A strengthened multilateral system which would really attain the purposes of the Charter and address the realities of the 1990s and beyond demands sustained international cooperation in order to ensure that the national policies in many of the countries in transition are viable.

Strengthening the international cooperation system to promote democracy requires an agenda coordinated between the United Nations system and international financial institutions. The requisite economic and financial stability must be based on political and social stability, with respect for human rights. For this reason, there is a need to re-establish and bolster democratic structures, which, together with poverty relief policies

and policies to protect the environment, may make healthy and fair economic growth sustainable. Hence, we support the call of the Economic and Social Council and the World Hearings on Development.

Strengthening world democratic structures is the very essence of the common work of the United Nations system. The pioneering role the United Nations has played in Nicaragua through the work of the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), as well as in other Central American countries through various initiatives, is one small example of the support the United Nations can provide to other countries, in particular new or restored democracies, that request it.

It is also important for the international community, through the United Nations system, to support internal efforts at concertation, to bring new protagonists into political, economic and social processes, to bolster electoral systems, to improve judicial structures, to support parliamentary activities, to improve observance of human rights, and to support political, administrative and financial decentralization. All those areas call for special attention in the context of cooperation for development. The transition from conflict to peace, to the rehabilitation of physical and human infrastructures and to sustainable development requires the consolidation of solid, lasting democratic institutions.

The consolidation of the majority of new or restored democracies requires sustained, determined action at the national level and complementary cooperation from outside. This should not end with the conclusion of political agreements or the holding of elections, but should be sustained until commitments are fulfilled. The final goal should be the consolidation of peace and democracy and, hence, political and economic stability.

The renewed confidence in multilateralism as vital for resolving the crucial questions of our time is the product of the positive climate in international relations. It has created great opportunities for the United Nations to give broad support to new processes of transition to peace and democracy.

It is no secret that the international community is slowly moving away from confrontation and inaugurating a new age of cooperation and understanding, with greater respect for the principles of international law and for the observance of human rights, thus beginning a more positive phase of international cooperation. My delegation considers that, among the major objectives of the Agenda for Peace and of the Agenda for Development, the United Nations should give its firmest support not only to economic reform but also to the transition to democracy and to the strengthening of institutions in new or restored democracies that request such support to prevent their gains from being reversed and to ensure lasting peace.

United Nations support for new or restored democracies can have many dimensions and objectives. There are countless initiatives that the United Nations could take in this sphere. In that spirit, and given the large number of options — such as the cost of war compared with that of conflict prevention — we share the view that the international community could consider the establishment of a trust fund to provide special resources to support the efforts and initiatives of Governments requesting such resources to help in strengthening democratic institutions, management capacity in key areas, and of the governability of our countries.

In that context, I want to recall these words used by the President of Nicaragua, Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, during the general debate at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly:

> "I believe that countries in transition from war to peace, which have signed international agreements to attain total pacification, democracy and reconstruction, should have access to a special fund to enable them to stand again on their own feet and go forward". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 8th meeting, p. 12)*

This fund, which could be a trust fund, would be administered by the United Nations in accordance with its rules and regulations, and appropriate follow-up machinery would be devised for managing the fund. Contributions could include: voluntary contributions from the peace dividend resulting, *inter alia*, from reductions in military budgets; contributions by interested Governments; and contributions from other governmental, private or individual sources committed to democracy. Along with other United Nations initiatives, the fund could be an excellent agent of preventive diplomacy and peace-building, and would be extremely efficient, considering that the sums involved would be insignificant compared with the enormous, inevitable cost of war in terms of human suffering and serious material damage, or with the lesser but still great cost of

deploying peace-keeping operations when it has become difficult to prevent war.

The main goal of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held at Managua in July this year, was not merely to reaffirm the pre-eminence and effectiveness of representative democracy as a system of government, with broad consideration of the question of governability in new democracies, and the successes, weaknesses, prospects and challenges of those democracies in the new international context, but also to heighten international awareness of the complexity of these processes. At the Conference we adopted the Managua Declaration and a Plan of Action that we believe are of historic importance. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for having circulated those documents as an annex to document A/49/713. The documents contain specific recommendations intended to preserve and build on previous achievements in the democratization process; these can provide the international community and the United Nations with an integrated frame of reference that will be useful in providing support to new or restored democracies.

The Assembly's consideration of this item enables us to look at various alternatives and to adopt important recommendations to put into effect the commitments set out in the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action. It will also enable us to share frankly and fully with the rest of the international community our Governments' concern with respect to the structural vulnerability of new or restored democracies, which stems from internal factors as well as from an international economic environment that seems to conspire against democracy.

In that connection, over 70 countries agreed, under the procedures established, to request the Secretary-General at this session to prepare a study of the ways and mechanisms by which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, especially since that is consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations in the areas of the maintenance of international peace and security and of economic and social development.

I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.49, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", on behalf of its 55 sponsors, to which I can now add Armenia, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan.

The draft resolution reflects the widespread interest of Members of the United Nations to look objectively and realistically at the question of consolidating democracy in countries that are undergoing a transition in that direction.

The draft resolution is straightforward and concise. In its first preambular paragraph the Assembly would note with satisfaction that the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Managua, Nicaragua. The widespread interest in that Conference was evidenced by the presence of more than 70 countries from all over the world as participants and observers, in addition to special guests and international bodies. There was an exchange of experiences that will unquestionably enrich and energize the democratic processes of each of our countries, and will make a special contribution to world peace.

In the second preambular paragraph the Assembly would recognize the importance of the documents adopted at the Conference. The political Declaration stressed the value of democracy as an integral part of the overall political process, and noted the relationship between political stability, reconciliation and sustainable development at the national level, and peace and security at the international level, all within a broader concept of security. At the same time, it appealed to the international community to devote greater attention to the efforts undertaken and the obstacles faced by new or restored democracies. The Plan of Action identified priority areas and specific measures to promote new or restored democracies. This was the first time that a large number of countries had adopted a document of this kind.

In the third preambular paragraph the Assembly would note that the Conference participants decided to request the Secretary-General to undertake a study of the item now under consideration.

Operative paragraphs 1 and 2 request the Secretary-General to prepare and submit a comprehensive report, identifying the ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

Operative paragraph 3 requests the inclusion of the item now under consideration on the agenda of the next session of the General Assembly. This reflects the urgent need for the United Nations to continue considering this matter. The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is an appropriate occasion for the international community

to reaffirm its commitment to democracy within the framework of an innovative approach to support these processes.

In this context, the conciseness of that the draft resolution, as well as the clarity and the feasibility of its requests, can be readily appreciated. Hence, the sponsors hope that the General Assembly will adopt it unanimously.

The spirit of the twenty-first century can already be discerned; and when the next millennium of our era begins, mankind will still be faced with critical global problems threatening its very existence. However, we cannot deny that the world has become a slightly better and slightly fairer place, in which democracy is the keystone for the construction of tomorrow's world.

The international community must not turn its back on the new horizons being offered to new or restored democracies by changing international circumstances. Let us together explore the ways and means that will enable us to free ourselves from the shadows of the upheavals of that period of history known as the cold war. Let us work to ensure that people, to ensure that the youth, women and children of tomorrow will live in peace and with hope. Let us not let future generations, the precious resource of democracy, pay the price of our failures.

The President: I propose that we now close the list of speakers on this item. If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

Mr. Dumitriu (Romania): The agenda item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" might begin a new era in the post-cold war history of the United Nations. Democracy may prove itself a key word for the endeavours of the Organization aimed at preserving peace and security and at building a comprehensive framework for development and for enduring human progress.

A democratic society will always be inclined to put intelligence and wisdom in play to solve its problems or settle conflicts, instead of resorting to force. As wisely underlined in the latest Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization:

> "Democracy fosters creativity, good governance and the stability that can maintain progress towards development over time." *(A/49/1, para. 6)*

Yet, recognition of the importance of democratic mechanisms and institutions as a common value can give a new lease of life to the attempts of the international community to face the challenges of development.

This was precisely the crucial message of the documents adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua in July 1994. In this perspective, the participants in the Conference decided to request the Secretary-General to study ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations could support the efforts to promote and consolidate democracy. The Conference recognized the value of democracy as an integral part of the political and development processes in national societies and of peace and security in the international community. It also expressed the conviction that the advance of democratic and pluralistic systems, promotion of political and civil liberties and granting equal opportunities are important prerequisites for consistent and sustainable development.

The process of strengthening democratic institutions and pursuing economic reforms in the new or restored democracies is confronted by serious obstacles. Therefore, there is a clear need to broaden the dialogue between the old democracies and the new or restored ones in a common effort to consolidate democracy and ensure its irreversible character everywhere.

In view of its universal vocation and competence, the United Nations cannot stand aside. It should energize its own capabilities to participate in this process. The experience of the Organization, for example, in supporting electoral activities and the capacity-building of national democratic institutions as well as in post-conflict peace-building represent an asset that the United Nations will know how to continue and enhance. We believe that support for democracy is part and parcel of preventive diplomacy. We are convinced that adoption of today's draft resolution will be a significant step in what may become a new dimension of United Nations activity.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Philippines for its forward-looking idea of organizing, as early as in 1988, the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. In the specific circumstances of that time, the Manila Conference identified a very precious asset in the international dialogue that augured well for subsequent developments in world affairs which culminated in the revolutionary year 1989.

We would also like to thank the Government of Nicaragua for reviving the idea and sparing no effort to ensure the success of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. Indeed, the Managua Conference resulted not only in unprecedented participation but also with substantial documents rich in theoretical and practical ideas.

The Government of Romania, which was designated to host the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 1996, is fully committed to continuing and enriching the praiseworthy work accomplished by its predecessors. It is our belief that international forums for democracy should not repeat what other bodies have already done or argue on controversial matters that have not, thus far, been solved. The Conference on democracy is trying to enhance the international dialogue on the basis of a fundamental asset: democratic values as shared by countries, irrespective of their level of economic development, and of their tradition and experience in democratic life.

In this respect, we are deeply grateful to the European Union and its member States, which grasped the message launched by the new or restored democracies and supported the initiative referred to in draft resolution A/49/L.49. My country is particularly pleased to note this encouraging support inasmuch as its own cooperation with the European Union in the last five years has constantly intensified.

It is our hope that the draft resolution entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" will be adopted by consensus. It is our conviction that measures provided therein will bring about the results expected by Member States.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The Philippines supports draft resolution A/49/L.49. We hope that it will be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

I should like to use the preambular and operative paragraphs of the draft resolution as a framework for my comments.

The first preambular paragraph refers to the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held from 4 to 6 July 1994. The Philippines congratulates the Government of Nicaragua on hosting that Conference. The first Conference was held in Manila in 1988, two years after democratic institutions had been restored in the Philippines. Thirteen States participated in the Manila Conference. In Managua, last July, over 50 States and many observers participated.

A Declaration was adopted in Manila. In Managua, as is noted in the second preambular paragraph, both a Declaration and a Plan of Action were adopted. Managua reaffirmed the fundamental elements of the Manila Declaration and elaborated on them. The Plan of Action manifested the seriousness of new and restored democracies about maintaining and improving their democratic institutions, despite problems both internal and external.

The Philippines believes that the request made of the Secretary-General in the third preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 1 is fully in line with his own thinking. In his 6 May 1994 report to the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development, the Secretary-General identified five dimensions of development: peace, the economy, environmental protection, social justice and democracy.

In that report, the Secretary-General states that

> "Democracy and development are linked in fundamental ways. They are linked because democracy provides the only long-term basis for managing competing ethnic, religious, and cultural interests in a way that minimizes the risk of violent internal conflict. They are linked because democracy is inherently attached to the question of governance, which has an impact on all aspects of development efforts. They are linked because democracy is a fundamental human right, the advancement of which is itself an important measure of development. They are linked because people's participation in the decision-making processes which affect their lives is a basic tenet of development" *(A/48/935, para. 120)*.

The Secretary-General also very rightly reminds us in his report that

> "the World Conference on Human Rights stressed the mutually reinforcing interrelationship of democracy, development and respect for human rights" *(ibid., para. 119)*.

In the context of the United Nations consideration of development as a priority issue of our times, the linkage of democracy and development is very significant. Because of this linkage and the obvious linkage of development to domestic stability and international peace and security, it is important for the United Nations — an organization committed to "the prevention and removal of threats to the peace" — to support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

For the Philippines and for other democracies — whether old or new — United Nations support for democratic Governments should seem easy, since the founding fathers of the Organization reaffirmed in the Charter their faith

> "in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small" —

elements essential to a democracy. In fact, the United Nations prides itself on the democratic nature of its governance and of its procedural *modus operandi*.

But United Nations support, to be effective and durable, should be based on a serious study of the scope of support, of ways and means to achieve objectives, and of organization-wide acceptance of the objectives and the means. What, on a concrete level, can the United Nations do, and what can it or should it not do?

One year should be sufficient for carrying out such a study, including consultations with Member States and with political scientists, economists and other experts. Thus, the Philippines agrees to the request, in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, that the Secretary-General submit a report on the study to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

In order for the Secretary-General's study to be properly appreciated by the general membership of the United Nations, the General Assembly should incorporate in the agenda of its fiftieth session an item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The Conference of New and Restored Democracies, which was first held in Manila, moved to Latin America this year and will be held in Europe in two years. The report of the Secretary-General and its discussion by the General Assembly will serve as an important input to the Third International Conference of New and Restored Democracies, which will be hosted by Romania in 1996.

Let me reiterate the full support of the Philippine delegation for draft resolution A/49/L.49, which was introduced by my colleague from Nicaragua.

Mr. Mongbe (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): Before getting to the heart of the matter before us, I should like to pay a sincere tribute to the people and the Government of Nicaragua for the warm welcome they gave my delegation during the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in their beautiful capital, Managua, from 4 to 6 July 1994. Their excellent organizational abilities ensured the success of that Conference, the fruits of which we are enjoying today.

I welcome the opportunity to say a few words from this rostrum on the restoration of democracy in several African countries, including Benin; on the strengthening of democratic regimes throughout the world; and on the cooperation that must exist between young democracies on all continents as well as their relationships with the older democracies and with the United Nations system.

I do not wish to engage in tiresome or laborious process of definition and semantics. Hence, I shall merely spell out at the outset what my delegation understands by democracy.

The idea of democracy has become multifaceted and thus cannot be locked into a single definition that might qualify or disqualify certain political systems. Of course, it is very useful to highlight freedom as the keystone of the democratic structure and thus conform to a reality that makes us feel more comfortable about pluralistic democracy. This presupposes that the democratization process implies respect for fundamental rights, the opening of political dialogue, free elections and alternating accessions to power designed to guarantee a pluralistic society.

The present situation in Africa clearly indicates that the States that accept true pluralism are those that ensure the promotion and respect of human rights in their entirety, even if conflicts can still occur and there are still varying degrees of protection of those rights.

There would be no point in delving here into the merits of a democratic or a pluralistic society. What I should like to say, as others have done, is that political pluralism and democracy should not appear only as words in the Constitution or be used to spruce up political discourse, thus serving only as an alluring window display that in no way corresponds to anything inside the store.

I must say a few words here on the democratization movement that has shaken up the African continent over the past few years. I wish to recall that, in Africa, the States that were structured in the pre-colonial era were truly multi-ethnic federations. Colonization created quite heterogenous entities resulting from negotiations on the spot that arose from exploration, military expeditions and commercial interests.

At the time of independence, the colonial Powers did not opt for federations or large entities. On the contrary, they encouraged the Balkanization of Africa. Thus were born States that were weak on both the political and the economic level. The difference between the precolonial African States and those emerging from decolonization is that the former exercised limited functions at the level of central power, guaranteeing security and collecting tribute or duties without intervening in the social relations within each ethnic group, which maintained its language, laws and customs. On the other hand, the modern African States, designed from the outset to mimic the European colonizing States, sought to define and impose laws that were supposed to represent the will of the entire collective and therefore became caricatures of those they wished to imitate.

The state system of dominating and unifying society, and the desire to give society a national identity and to mobilize the population around new ideals formed the bases of the authoritarian formula chosen by almost every government after independence. This would explain the unanimous discourse observed in most one-party African States, Black African presidentialisms, the inroads of so-called African socialism and so on. After the military replaced politicians deemed incompetent or corrupt, it preserved the same language and behaviour in the name of the "public weal", "national reconstruction", "national renewal", sometimes even of "peoples revolutions" and a host of others.

In short, monolithism was the rule almost throughout Africa, where traditional aristocracies, trade unions, women's movements and youth associations were simply lumped together under one party. All forms of basic freedoms were stifled and the concept of human rights became a dangerous virus to be stamped out in any intellectual or citizen who would dare to refer to them.

Arbitrary arrests, detention without trial, sham courts, torture, political assassinations and other violations of human rights were frequently the lot of African populations during these decades. As if to put the finishing touches to this already surreal picture of conditions in their countries, certain leaders plunged headlong into corruption, chaos and the pillage of national finances by the scandalous transferral of funds into foreign bank accounts, leaving their peoples in destitution and poverty, with the resulting hunger, infant mortality and high death rates. What would seem to be even more shocking, and what history has not sufficiently decried, is that many of these leaders enjoyed the support of non-African countries that were champions of democracy and, in some cases, of countries of the former communist bloc. Some even had sponsors in both camps.

It is this picture — painted in very broad strokes, to be sure — that we must keep in mind if we are to understand the need for the changes currently under way in Africa. The local conditions of each country involved — geographical, historical, sociological and so on — have largely shaped the course of events.

Since 1987, and more openly in 1988, glasnost and perestroika breathed new vitality, a breath of spring, into the political life of the Soviet Union. The Soviet peoples and the Eastern Europeans began to cherish the hope of being able to shake off the totalitarian yoke.

At the same time, in October 1988, the population of Algiers rose as one to challenge political monolithism and compel its leaders to embark on the path of democratic reform. This was the start of the great democratization movement that is still making waves throughout Africa, with more or less happy results. This irreversible movement has won its place in history, even if it can be neither imported nor exported.

In my country, Benin, the democratization process developed in a fashion that is almost unique when compared to all the difficulties that were unfortunately experienced elsewhere. Indeed, to put an end to arbitrary power and economic decline, the country's grassroots leadership — political figures, youth associations, women's movements, religious groups and leaders, intellectuals, peasants' groups, development associations, human rights activists and traditional leaders — put constant pressure on the Marxist military regime and eventually compelled it to accept dialogue.

Thus, harried by quarrels within the ruling party and the government team and by social tensions within the country that had gradually paralysed the functioning of the State, the Head of State at that time, in order to resolve the crisis, resigned himself to convening a national conference of the nation's grassroots leadership. This conference, which took place in Cotonou in February 1990, enjoyed extensive powers. It laid the foundations for a democratic renewal based on the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and multiparty governance, and drew up new political guidelines. It established a transition period of one year with democratic institutions responsible for the effective implementation of its decisions, among which was the drafting of a constitution to be submitted to a popular referendum.

The task appeared to be a gamble in which few people, within or outside Benin, placed much faith. Today, all agree that the transition in Benin was peaceful, even if certain obstacles, such as the clash of political ambitions, had to be overcome. The success of the mission was due to the enthusiasm and maturity of the people of Benin, the wisdom of experienced political leaders, the tact of those involved in the democratic renewal, and the blessing of God.

Ever since the legislative elections in February and the presidential elections in March 1991, Benin has been spared the experience of murderous upheavals. Benin is currently evolving in an era of democratic renewal based on a fundamental opposition to arbitrary power, parochialism, tribalism and fanaticism of every stripe. It is a pleasure to note the determination of the people of Benin to create a State of law and democratic pluralism, necessary conditions in which every citizen of Benin can truly flourish on the physical, cultural and spiritual levels. All the planned democratic institutions have been established thanks to the faith and loyalty of President Nicéphore Soglo and his government to the Constitution of 11 December 1990.

It would seem, in the light of events, that the experience of every African country must evolve from local conditions. Outside Benin, some countries have held their national conference. Some have taken another path to democratization leading to a multipartite system and free elections, while others are going through a long, slow process and have yet to achieve democracy. Finally, it should be noted that the path of democratization and respect for human rights had already been taken by a handful of countries before 1988 and has been happily strengthened since then.

I should like to refer to a statement issued by Benin's national union of higher education, which reads in part:

> "The world's situation teaches us that all economic, political, social, cultural and other problems can only be solved through the establishment of true democracy, which implies pluralism. It is because they ignored this fundamental demand of the peoples that various dictatorial regimes, east and west, north and south, failed so miserably."

The dynamics of history, intellectual inventiveness, a thirst for freedom, the aspiration fully to enjoy basic rights, and a wish to emerge from the slavery of underdevelopment have led diverse peoples of the world, and particularly of Africa, resolutely to besiege the fortresses of dictatorship that buttress monolithic regimes and thus to initiate everywhere, with a greater or lesser degree of success, the democratization that will allow humanity to stride proudly into the third millennium of our era.

That is why the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994, is so meaningful, for it allowed us to evaluate how far we have all come in seeking to overcome our weaknesses, that is, the childhood illnesses of democracy, in order to embark resolutely on a path towards seeking the ways and means of strengthening the process we have begun and to provide a confident future for our peoples.

Democracy can be consolidated only through harmonious economic development without major disruptions, and through sustainable development. Similarly, it cannot be strengthened without durable peace. In other words, democracy, development and peace are indissolubly linked. What we need in the wake

of the Managua Conference is to lay the foundations for a true partnership between our various countries, which have launched themselves into this difficult but noble process. We must avoid allowing it to become a regrettable adventure. Many impediments, of course, await us, including those arising from a poor understanding of democracy that leads to anarchy, where the various actors read their parts badly; those induced by the paralysis that often results from the poor functioning of the institutions that are established; those created by the resurgence of old putschist and adventurist tendencies, often engendered by the clash of ambitions; and those that take the form of external threats of destabilization posed by certain anachronistic regimes that feel insecure in the new democratic landscape.

Democracy is not and cannot be an end in itself. It must not only resolve the basic problems of society but also promote the full flowering of the human person by placing heavy emphasis on economic and social development, social justice and the necessary participation of all citizens in the life of their society. We must close ranks to meet the major challenges to which confront democracy can be exposed and which take the form of poverty and all its consequences, and the rise of dangers such as ethnic conflict, illegal drug trafficking, international terrorism, religious fanaticism, the progression of the AIDS pandemic, the ravages of malaria and so on.

The peoples of our various countries are impatient to experience development. That is why we have prepared a consistent and realistic Plan of Action in keeping with their legitimate hopes. The implementation of such a programme, which the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua has just spoken of so eloquently in outlining it, must rest on a real awareness on the part of all Governments and be based on solidarity between all members of the family of which we are now members and, finally — and why not — on generous assistance from the old and more prosperous democracies, as well as on the United Nations system. That leads me to the last point I wish to make before the General Assembly.

The countries I have ventured to refer to as the "old and more prosperous democracies" owe it to themselves to demonstrate a certain amount of political will to guarantee the survival of democracy once and for all in countries which have just restored it or just won it. That presupposes that they must pay particular attention not only to the Plan of Action we drafted at the Managua Conference but also to the national programmes and projects that our Governments will submit to them within the context of economic development or economic recovery. Only respect for the commitments contained in the various international instruments of consensus will contribute to strengthening the democratic process in the countries that have taken this path.

We can also rely on the availability of the United Nations, which has already made a significant contribution to the establishment or restoration of democracy in more than one country, and which can still do much, together with the specialized agencies and subsidiary bodies, to strengthen the emerging or re-emerging democracies by providing them with increased assistance in all areas of their activity.

Perhaps this is the time and place to make a sincere appeal to all the old democracies of the developed world and to the United Nations system to take more seriously the praiseworthy efforts that are being made by the new or restored democracies, as well as the pitiless obstacles that often confront them as they protect and strengthen the democratic process.

Far be it from me to proclaim the idea of claiming "bonuses for democracy", as some malicious people like to say in mocking the generous and spontaneous assistance provided by certain developed countries to emerging or re-emerging democracies. My appeal is rather aimed at establishing the psychological and material conditions for a special partnership, one based on solidarity among the countries that have courageously chosen the difficult and bitter, but noble path of democracy and respect for human dignity.

My delegation is convinced that the greater the geographical area where men and women acquire a true culture of democracy, the greater and more certain will be the realm of lasting and fruitful peace.

Before concluding, I beg the Assembly's indulgence for taking the time to express the satisfaction of the delegation of Benin at the decision of Romania to host in Bucharest the Third International Conference of New and Restored Democracies. This offer augurs well for the rapid consolidation of ties of solidarity among the countries of this family, which has continued to grow since the historic ministerial meeting of the new and restored democracies held in Manila in 1988.

The delegation of Benin is pleased at this new departure for the development and strengthening of democracy throughout the world and the well-being of mankind. Our Assembly's adoption of draft resolution A/49/L.49, introduced by the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua on behalf of a number of delegations, including my own, will be a first step in the right direction.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.